



Letter from the Administration on Aging

Dear Colleague:

The Administration on Aging (AoA) is pleased to present our informational resource materials for Older Americans Month, May 2001.

As we begin a new chapter in the history of humankind, previously unimaginable numbers of people are growing to an advanced age in America and, indeed, the world. The implications and profound impact of human longevity upon virtually every facet of our lives are staggering. The lead story of the 21st century is the gift of longevity, which offers many challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing political, economic and social landscape – not just here in the United States, but all over the globe. In recognition of aging as a “global” issue and of our own nation’s rapidly increasing multi-cultural and multi-generational aging population, the theme for this year’s Older Americans Month 2001 is “The Many Faces of Aging.”

The past several months have been an extraordinary time for AoA and for all older Americans. In November 2000, the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000 were signed into law. The Act includes a historical milestone in our nation’s efforts to establish a long-term care policy – the National Family Caregiver Support Program – which directly responds to the needs of more than 7 million informal caregivers, who give unselfishly of themselves to care for older loved ones who wish to remain at home. This strengthened and improved Act along with the many programs AoA is actively addressing, such as caregiver diversity, older people living alone, mental health issues of older Americans, and our efforts to end health disparities among minorities will help to provide us with new resources, new opportunities, and a renewed sense of hope to better serve older Americans and their families in the 21st century.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy began the tradition of setting aside the month of May in honor of our country’s older Americans, and every President since then has continued this great tradition. It is a specific time designed for creating an awareness and relaying the message that there are federal, state, and local programs designed to keep people independent and motivate them to seek out those programs that can be of assistance. It is a month in which we – as a nation – come together to honor the contributions of older persons past, present and future.

The Administration on Aging celebrates the contributions of older Americans every day of the year. We look forward to working with you now and in the years to come to better serve America’s elders. We hope you will find the materials we have prepared useful, and we look forward to inspiring new and innovative ideas to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

